

What is claimed is:

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1. A dispatch management system for maintaining information on the status of vehicles, the system including a host, and at least one terminal coupled to the host for the entry of an order for the dispatch of a vehicle.
 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the at least one terminal includes at least one order entry terminal.
 3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information includes a time stamp for indicating when a transaction is ordered by a customer.
 4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information includes the status of the order.
 5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information includes whether placement of the order by the customer is complete.
 6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information includes whether the vehicle can be driven.
 7. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information includes whether the vehicle must be towed.
 8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information includes whether a key for operating the vehicle is available.
 9. The apparatus of claim 1 including apparatus for at least one of generating machine-readable code and scanning machine-readable code for at least one of correlating vehicle information and updating vehicle information.
 10. The apparatus of claim 1 including apparatus for creating at least one of a waybill, a bill of lading, an invoice, and an identifier for the vehicle.
 11. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the at least one terminal is coupled to the host for the entry of an order by a customer.
 12. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information on the status of a vehicle includes at least one of: a transaction number; a waybill number; who authorized the order; who placed the order; the orderer's account number; the orderer's reference for the transaction; where the vehicle is located; where the vehicle is to be delivered; when the order was sent to dispatch; when a driver was dispatched to pick up the vehicle; the driver's identity; the vehicle's identity; information on the

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vehicle's fuel; information on the vehicle's lubricant; vehicle odometer data at the point of origin; vehicle odometer data at the destination; when the vehicle was delivered to the destination; the identity of the recipient; and, the dispatch status of the vehicle.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the vehicle's identity
5 includes at least one of: a vehicle identification number; the year of the vehicle; the make of the vehicle; the model of the vehicle; and, the color of the vehicle.

14. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the terminal for the entry of an order for the dispatch of the vehicle includes a terminal for updating the dispatch status of the vehicle.

10 15. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the information on the status of the vehicle includes the assignment of a driver for collection of the vehicle.

16. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the terminal for the entry of an order for the dispatch of the vehicle includes a terminal for at least one of generating order confirmation and transmitting order confirmation.

15 17. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least one of the host and the terminal includes means for generating at least one of statistics and reports from information collected by the system.

18. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the host includes information from which a driver can be assigned.

20 19. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the host includes a host for at least one of creating a visual indication based on a criterion and displaying a visual indication based on a criterion.

20. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the host includes a host for automatically changing information based on a criterion.

25 21. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the host includes a host for searching for information based on a criterion.

22. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the host includes a host for identifying individuals who modify stored information.

30 23. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the host includes a host for controlling access to the system for changing information stored in the system.

24. A method for maintaining information on the status of vehicles, the method including providing a dispatch management system host, and at least one terminal coupled to the host for the entry of an order for the dispatch of a vehicle.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein providing at least one terminal includes providing at least one order entry terminal.

26. The method of claim 24 wherein maintaining the information includes placing a time stamp on a transaction when the transaction is ordered by a customer.

27. The method of claim 24 wherein maintaining the information includes maintaining the status of the order.

28. The method of claim 24 wherein maintaining the information includes determining whether placement of the order by a customer is complete.

29. The method of claim 24 wherein maintaining the information includes maintaining information concerning whether the vehicle can be driven.

30. The method of claim 24 wherein maintaining the information includes maintaining information concerning whether the vehicle must be towed.

31. The method of claim 24 wherein maintaining the information includes maintaining information concerning whether a key for operating the vehicle is available.

32. The method of claim 24 including at least one of generating machine-readable code and scanning machine-readable code for at least one of correlating vehicle information and updating vehicle information.

33. The method of claim 24 including creating at least one of a waybill, a bill of lading, an invoice, and an identifier for the vehicle.

34. The method of claim 24 wherein providing the at least one terminal coupled to the host includes providing at least one terminal coupled to the host for the entry of an order by a customer.

35. The method of claim 24 wherein maintaining information on the status of a vehicle includes maintaining at least one of: a transaction number; a waybill number; who authorized the order; who placed the order; the orderer's account number; the orderer's reference for the transaction; where the vehicle is located; where the vehicle is to be delivered; when the order was sent to dispatch; when a driver was

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5 dispatched to pick up the vehicle; the driver's identity; the vehicle's identity; information on the vehicle's fuel; information on the vehicle's lubricant; vehicle odometer data at the point of origin; vehicle odometer data at the destination; when the vehicle was delivered to the destination; the identity of the recipient; and, the dispatch status of the vehicle.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein providing the vehicle's identity includes providing at least one of: a vehicle identification number; the year of the vehicle; the make of the vehicle; the model of the vehicle; and, the color of the vehicle.

10 37. The method of claim 35 wherein providing the terminal for the entry of an order for the dispatch of the vehicle includes providing a terminal for updating the dispatch status of the vehicle.

38. The method of claim 24 wherein providing the information on the status of the vehicle includes providing the assignment of a driver for collection of the vehicle.

15 39. The method of claim 24 wherein providing the terminal for the entry of an order for the dispatch of the vehicle includes providing a terminal for at least one of generating order confirmation and transmitting order confirmation.

20 40. The method of claim 24 wherein providing at least one of the host and the terminal includes generating at least one of statistics and reports from information collected by the system.

41. The method of claim 24 wherein providing the host includes providing information from which a driver can be assigned.

25 42. The method of claim 24 wherein providing the host includes providing a host for at least one of creating a visual indication based on a criterion and displaying a visual indication based on a criterion.

43. The method of claim 24 wherein providing the host includes providing a host for automatically changing information based on a criterion.

44. The method of claim 24 wherein providing the host includes providing a host for searching for information based on a criterion.

30 45. The method of claim 24 wherein providing the host includes providing a host for identifying individuals who modify stored information.

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46. The method of claim 24 wherein providing the host includes providing a host for controlling access to the system for changing information stored in the system.

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